

Building a High-Impact Literacy Professional Learning Plan

The primary focus of a school's Literacy Professional Learning Plan is student learning.

The corresponding instructional needs of teachers become the basis for a school's literacy professional learning plan.

Consider the following questions/practices to help determine literacy professional learning (PL) needs.

1. What specific, focused knowledge or skills do educators in the school need to help them provide explicit literacy instruction in all content areas?

Five practices that are heavily supported by research*:

- ✓ explicit vocabulary instruction
- ✓ direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction
- ✓ extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation
- ✓ Increased student motivation and engagement in literacy learning
- ✓ intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers

***Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices: A Practice Guide** Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., and Torgesen, J. (2008). (NCEE #2008-4027). U.S. Department of Education. <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>

2. What evidence will be used to determine those needs?

Some of the ways schools can gather evidence and inform decisions -

- use focus groups to gather teacher input on needed PL (This could happen in cross-curricular teams, grade level groups or content area groups.)
- survey educators individually to assure their voice is heard and their perspective and insights are shared
- gather evidence from other stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, community members)

- involve all educators in the school in the process of analyzing literacy-related data from diagnostic and common assessments, writing and communication collections that represent the growth of individual students, and any other source already available to inform decisions

3. How will the identified needs be prioritized to support active, sustained learning?

The following questions will guide the process for prioritizing needs:

- Have we considered the five research-based literacy practices listed in #1 above?
- What specific needs did the analysis of available data indicate were the greatest?
- What will have the greatest impact on the largest number of students?
- What short-term focus will yield positive, quick, motivating results for individual students (and teachers)?

4. What will the plan of action set collaboratively by educators be?

- Is the plan of action prioritized according to identified needs?
- How will the plan assure educators receive the help they need to provide explicit literacy instruction in all content areas?
- What will the learning targets be for each element of the PL?
- Will those learning targets be linked to teachers' individual professional growth plans?
- Who will monitor implementation and outcomes throughout the PL process?
- Does the plan include provisions for teachers to collaborate and reflect throughout the PL process?

5. What varied professional learning opportunities will be sustained, intensive and classroom focused and what evidence will indicate that educators have acquired and are using what they learned? (Note: That evidence should ultimately inform future professional learning needs.)

See example below:

Professional Learning Opportunity	Evidence
Professional learning communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ minutes, agendas from meetings ○ data from analysis of student work ○ data from using a literacy walk-through instrument ○ observation of changes in instruction ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction
On-line learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ observation evidence that course content has been implemented into instruction ○ data from using a literacy walk-through instrument ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction
Study groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ evidence that all participants are participating in the study ○ observation of impact on instruction (i.e. teachers are able to overcome obstacles and implement strategies that work) ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction
Peer collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teachers planning literacy instruction together ○ teachers sharing successful strategies ○ teachers solving instructional problems together ○ data from using a literacy walk-through instrument ○ observation data that shows impact on instruction ○ student performance data that shows the impact

	of the instruction
Instructional demonstrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ skilled teachers modeling literacy lessons for their peers ○ teachers actively engaged in the lesson observations ○ post-observation discussions between the teacher who modeled the lessons and those who observed ○ teachers using the observed literacy lessons and strategies in their own classrooms ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction ○ teachers observing students' responses during the demonstrations
Video-taping and analyzing taped lesson (lesson study)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ groups of teachers viewing and analyzing the strategies used in taped literacy lessons ○ evidence from observations (or additional taped lessons) that demonstrate what they learned is being applied in their own literacy lessons ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction ○ teachers viewing students' responses
Teacher feedback from peers (peer coaching)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teachers observing their peers and sharing feedback on their literacy lessons ○ post-observation discussions between the teacher who was observed those who observed ○ data from using a literacy walk-through instrument ○ administrator evaluation/observation results that

	<p>show a change in the effectiveness of instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction ○ teachers observing students' reactions to lessons
Analysis of student work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teachers having conversations around common strengths and weaknesses in student communication skills ○ post-analysis discussions about next-steps/next lessons that will guide students as they develop their communication skills ○ observation results that show a change in the effectiveness of instruction ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction
Workshops (a component of an intentionally designed comprehensive planned to improve student literacy growth and development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ observations or walk-through data that show that teachers are implementing what they've learned in a literacy workshop ○ teachers collaboratively sharing strategies that worked when they implemented knowledge, strategies or skills they acquired during professional learning opportunities ○ data from follow-up surveys used periodically throughout the year to evaluate the impact of the professional learning on instruction and student outcomes
Professional conferences (chosen to support specifically identified professional growth needs relevant to the school's literacy plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teachers developing and sharing professional learning with their peers following participation in a conference ○ observation data that shows teachers are using literacy skills, strategies or knowledge they learned

	<p>at a conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction
Book studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ teachers reading, participating in focused discussions and collaborating about literacy-related resources they are reading ○ teachers sharing lessons they developed based on their shared book study ○ data from using a literacy walk-through instrument ○ observation data that shows teachers are using what they have learned from the book study ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction
Literacy coaching	<p>Evidence that the literacy coach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ observes teachers' practices and offer guidance and feedback ○ demonstrates lessons ○ helps create solutions to instructional problems ○ helps teachers group students and plan for interventions ○ assists teachers in using assessment results to inform instruction <p>Evidence of coaching impact on instruction and student outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ observation data that shows evidence that teachers are implementing instructional strategies

	<p>or refining their instruction based on what they learn from working with the literacy coach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ data from using a literacy walk-through instrument ○ student performance data that shows the impact of the instruction
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6. What support will leadership provide to facilitate sustained, job-embedded, collaborative teacher learning that will foster incremental improvement in the art and the practice of teaching?

- facilitate time for teacher collaboration (possibly by rethinking the master schedule or reallocation of staff time)
- personally participate in teacher learning opportunities in order to know what specifically to look for during observations
- require short-term and long-term evidence that teachers are applying what they have learned in their professional learning experiences
- use initial, interim and long-term reflection feedback questionnaires, interviews and observations to capture the impact evidence
 - use the feedback to inform future professional learning opportunities for individual teachers, teams or for the whole school
 - respond to teacher, team and schoolwide needs expressed in questionnaires and interviews (or in observations) by facilitating future learning opportunities that address those specific needs

7. Will the PL include resources and opportunities for explicit, systematic literacy instruction, including oral language, reading and writing across the curriculum that: [NOTE: These are just examples of explicit literacy instructional strategies.]

- develop student comprehension skills
- develop student vocabulary
- build student discussion and discourse skills
- help students develop their critical thinking and communication skills
- teach students how to logically organize their communications

- guide idea development in communication (oral, written, multimodal)

The chart that follows includes the broad literacy skills addressed in the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS). To access the complete standards document, go to the KDE website.

Use the chart that follows to:

- Identify PL needs related to literacy
- involve all the school's educators in making the decision about priority of the needs

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards to Guide Professional Learning Decisions

Elementary Literacy	Secondary Literacy	Focus for Professional Learning
Reading Anchor Standards	Reading Anchor Standards	The strategies listed in this section are simply examples. <u>This list is not all-inclusive.</u>
Key Ideas and Details - questioning text, using details to support conclusions when speaking and writing, determining main ideas, retelling and summarizing details, explaining the role of characters and events in text	Key Ideas and Details - determining explicit text meaning, drawing inferences and citing specific textual evidence to support meaning when speaking or writing, analyzing the development of themes or arguments, summarizing, and analyzing the interaction of individuals, events and ideas in a text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ questioning techniques ○ peer discussion strategies ○ summary strategies
Craft and Structure – identifying words and determining the meaning and function of words and phrases, recognizing/ determining text types and the structure of text, identifying, describing, and distinguishing point of view and perspectives	Craft and Structure – interpreting words and phrases and explaining their effect on meaning, analyzing text structure, assessing the impact of point of view and purpose on the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding text structure ○ understanding the impact of word choice on meaning and interpretation
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas – describing and analyzing the connection between text and illustrations and how they convey meaning, and	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas – integrating and evaluating content presented graphically, orally, visually and multimodally,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding how multi-media tools are used to communicate meaning effectively

comparing/contrasting characters, events, themes, and genres	delineating and evaluating arguments and claims in text, and analyzing and comparing the approaches authors take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding the structure and components of persuasive arguments
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity – read and comprehend a variety of genres independently and proficiently for the target grade level	Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity – read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently for the target grade level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding how to approach a variety of genres and how to adjust reading strategies with different genres
Reading Foundational Skills (K-5)		
Print Concepts (K-1) – demonstrating an understanding of the organization and basic features of print		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding the representation of language in print ○ recognizing the features of a sentence
Phonological Awareness (K-1) – demonstrating an understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ distinguishing vowel sounds and phonemes
Phonics and Word Recognition (K-5) – knowing and applying grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding how to use decoding strategies ○ understanding how to analyze words for meaning
Fluency (K-5) – read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding how to read for purpose ○ understanding how to use context clues
Writing Standards	Writing Standards	
Text Types and Purposes – writing opinions, writing to inform, to explain and to narrate using relevant supporting details.	Text Types and Purposes – writing arguments, writing informative or explanatory texts and narrative texts supported by valid reasoning and relevant evidence and details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ strategies for scaffolding writing instruction ○ strategies for writing opinions or arguments ○ strategies for writing to inform or explain ○ strategies for developing narrative writing

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ strategies to help students understand and establish purpose when writing
Production and Distribution of Writing – producing clear writing with guidance from adults, adding details, revising and editing to develop and strengthen the writing; exploring and using technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others	Production and Distribution of Writing – producing clear, coherent writing with elements appropriate for the purpose and audience; developing and strengthening writing with revising, and editing; using technology, including the Internet to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ strategies to teach students how to revise their communications ○ technology uses that will support students as they produce and publish their writing and communicate with others ○ strategies that will help students strength their communication
Research to Build and Present Knowledge – participating in shared research and short research projects using several sources to build knowledge; recalling and gathering information with guidance from adults and answering questions, taking notes, categorizing, summarizing and paraphrasing information; proving a list of sources	Research to Build and Present Knowledge – conducting short and sustained, focused research projects; gathering information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credulity and accuracy of the sources; integrating information without plagiarism and drawing evidence to support analysis, reflection and research from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ collaborative research strategies ○ how to assess the validity and credibility of sources ○ how summarize and paraphrase ○ how to document sources
Range of Writing (beginning with grade 3) – writing routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes and audiences	Range of Writing (beginning with grade 3) – writing routinely over extended and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes and audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ writing-to-learn strategies ○ discipline-specific writing strategies ○ writing for authentic audiences and purposes
Speaking and Listening Standards	Speaking and Listening Standards	
Comprehension and Collaboration – (K-2) participating in collaborative conversations about grade level topics and texts (3-5) – engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions building on others’ ideas and expressing their ideas clearly	Comprehension and Collaboration – preparing for and participating effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations, building on other’s ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively; integrating and evaluating content from multiple sources; evaluating a speaker’s perspective, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ strategies for engaging students in collaborative conversations ○ oral communication skills ○ strategies that teach students how to evaluate the content , evidence and rhetoric in speeches

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas (K-2) – describing familiar people, places, things and events with relevant details; adding visual and audio to clarify ideas, thought and feeling; expressing thoughts in complete sentences when appropriate to the task or situation (3-5) reporting in an organized manner on a topic or text, supporting ideas with relevant details; adapting speech for a variety of contexts	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas – presenting information, findings or relevant evidence in a logical manner appropriate to the task, purpose and audience; using digital media and visual displays strategically to clarify presentation message; adapting speech to a variety of contexts and communication tasks, demonstrating command of formal English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ strategies for teaching students how to organize oral presentations focused on audience and purpose ○ using digital media to enhance presentations ○ techniques for adapting speech to a variety of contexts and communication tasks
Standards for Language	Standards for Language	
Conventions – observing conventions of grammar and usage and command of the conventions of capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing or speaking	Conventions – demonstrating command of conventions of standard English grammar and usage, and command of the conventions of capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing or speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ techniques for integrating grammar, usage and conventions instruction into communication lessons
Effective Language Use (begins grade 3) – using language to achieve particular effects when writing or speaking	Effective Language Use – using language to enhance meaning, convey style, and achieve particular effects when writing or speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ vocabulary strategies that help students differentiate and use word choice effectively when communicating ○ strategies for teaching style in communication
Vocabulary Acquisition and Use – determining or clarifying meaning of unknown words and phrases based on grade-level content; demonstrating understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings; using words and phrases and phrases	Vocabulary Acquisition and Use – determining or clarifying the meaning of unknown words or phrases by using a variety of appropriate strategies; demonstrating understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings; acquiring and using accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific vocabulary sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening at the college and career readiness level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ vocabulary acquisition strategies that students can use to understand unknown words ○ techniques for teaching students domain-specific vocabulary they can use with all forms of communication